

TITUS

INTRODUCTION

Apparently Paul and Titus had been together in a ministry on the island of Crete (see [Titus 1:5](#)). I do not know how long they had been there. As we go through the epistle we will learn something about the people who lived on this island -- Paul didn't think too much of them, by the way. Paul evidently left to go to another place and then wrote this epistle to Titus, giving him instructions about what he was to do as a young preacher while remaining in Crete. The date he wrote it was around B.C. 64-67.

The fact that Paul's and Titus' ministry on Crete is not mentioned in Acts reveals that the Book of Acts does not contain all the record of the early church. Actually, it is a very small record, and only the ministries of two of the apostles are emphasized: Peter in the first part of the book and Paul in the second part. We do not have a complete record of even these two men's ministries.

In the two epistles to the Thessalonians Paul's great emphasis is on the coming of Christ - it is a bright and beautiful hope for him. Critics of Paul will point out that this was his position early in his ministry but that later on he did not emphasize it. However, Titus was written about the same time as 1 Timothy, right at the end of the ministry of the apostle Paul. In [Titus 2:13](#) Paul writes: "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." My friend, Paul had not lost the blessed hope of the church. I think it was shining bright and will shine even brighter ". . . until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts" ([2Pet. 1:19](#)).

Timothy and Titus were two young preachers whom Paul had the privilege of leading to the Lord. Paul calls both of them his sons, his genuine sons; that is, he led both of them to a saving knowledge of Christ.

Paul wrote letters to both of these brethren; we have two epistles to Timothy and one epistle to Titus. These letters are called Pastoral Epistles because in them Paul gives instruction to these young preachers concerning the local church. These letters also prove very profitable to us today. We have so much other instruction relative to the local church -- I suppose we could fill a whole library with the books that have been written on how to run the local church. In Scripture we have only these three epistles, and they are very brief; yet they do give us the essential *modus operandi* for the church. What they do impress upon us is that if there is a lack or a need in a church, it isn't a problem with the organization or with the system that is being used. Rather, if there is a need in a church, it is a spiritual need.

Frankly, we know very little about either of these young preachers, Timothy and Titus. Titus, however, seems to have been a stronger man, both physically and spiritually. Paul expressed less concern for Titus' welfare than he did for Timothy's. Titus was probably more mature, and he possessed a virile personality.

Timothy was a Jew who was circumcised by Paul, but Titus was a Gentile, and Paul refused to circumcise him. We read in Galatians that Paul took Titus with him to

Jerusalem, and since he was a Gentile, Paul would not permit him to be circumcised (see [Gal. 2:1-3](#)). But when he took Timothy with him, Paul had him circumcised (see [Acts 16:1-3](#)). Paul circumcised one young preacher and refused to circumcise the other. If you must draw a rule from that, it can only be this: "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature" ([Gal. 6:15](#)).

Paul said that he wanted to be all things to all men that he might win some to Christ -- to the Jew he wanted to be a Jew, and to the Gentile he wanted to be as a Gentile. He had Timothy circumcised because they were going to go into the synagogues. But in that great council of the church in Jerusalem, the gospel was at stake, and Paul would not permit one bit of legalism to slip in (see [Acts 15](#)); therefore he refused to let Titus be circumcised.

It is a dangerous thing to put down a series of little rules that are nothing in the world but a ritual whereby you attempt to live the Christian life. My friend, unless you have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ all else comes absolutely to nought.

In this epistle to Titus we have a fine picture of the New Testament church in its full-orbed realization in the community as an organization. I hear many folk today who say they are members of "a New Testament church." I would like to ask them if they have had anybody drop dead in their church recently. I am sure that they would exclaim that they had not had that experience! Well, in the early church, the New Testament church, we read of Ananias and Sapphira who dropped dead in the church because they had lied to the Holy Spirit (see [Acts 5](#)). I think that if this principle were operating in our churches today, the average church would need to be turned into a hospital or even a mortuary!

The ideal church, according to this epistle, (1) has an orderly organization, (2) is sound in doctrine, and (3) is pure in life, ready to every good work. This is the picture of the New Testament church that this epistle to Titus presents to us. In Timothy the emphasis was upon the need for sound teaching in the church. In Titus the emphasis is put upon the importance of God's order for the conduct of the churches. In fact, [Titus 1:5](#) is the key to the entire epistle: "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee." Titus was to set things in order in the churches in Crete.

In chapter 1 Paul says that the church is to be an orderly organization (see [Titus 1:5](#)). In chapter 2 he emphasizes that the church is to teach and preach the Word of God: "But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine" ([Titus 2:1](#)). He says that the church must be doctrinally sound in the faith. And then in chapter 3 we see that the church is to perform good works: "Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work" ([Titus 3:1](#)). In other words, the church is saved by grace, is to live by grace, and is to demonstrate her faith to the world by her good works.

I would say that it would be very difficult today to find a church that is using all three of these prongs, that is stressing all three of these tremendous emphases. Some will emphasize one, while others emphasize another. Let's look at each one a little more closely:

First of all, the church is to be an orderly church. Everything, Paul wrote to the Corinthians, should be done decently and in order (see [1Cor. 14:40](#)). Sometimes you don't find much order in a church, and often the reason is that there are a few officers who are trying to run the whole thing. Such a church is in real trouble and is a heartbreak to its pastor. The church is to be an orderly church, not run by a couple of deacons.

Secondly, in many churches you will find that there is no emphasis at all upon sound doctrine. Because of this, I always stress to young pastors that they should not focus on building a church or building an empire of any kind. I tell them just to teach and give out the Word of God. Rather than build an organization -- that is, a lot of buildings -- they should build into the lives of men and women. Whatever organization they have built on a church may be wrecked by others later on after they have left. That will be a real heartbreak to a pastor unless he has before him the goal of building into the lives of men and women. That should be the emphasis in any church.

Finally, a church should be ready for every good work. Sometimes we fundamentalists put such a great emphasis on doctrine (although I don't think we overemphasize it) that we do underemphasize good works. A church should be engaged in good works. Many Christian organizations are so concerned with getting in the finances to carry on their program that they become more interested in getting people to give than in helping those people. A lot of folk need help -- not just spiritual help but also physical help. We need to do things for people, to help them with their physical needs.

I am happy that I can say there are many churches which are carrying on a work of helping people. I know of one church which has people who go out and visit shut-ins; they read to them, sew for them, and do many other helpful chores. That's a lovely thing to do. Our government is able to provide some care for the poor and needy, and that is wonderful, but we can go and sit down and talk with lonely people like this, which is a much-needed ministry today.

This is only a brief resume of this epistle to Titus. Liberalism has attempted to emphasize the third chapter which deals with good works, forgetting the two chapters on order and doctrine which precede it. Until a church has all three of these aspects that Paul has outlined, it has no claim to be called "a New Testament church."

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Chapter 1

THEME: The church is an organization

Introduction (1:1-4)

The introduction to Titus is characteristic of those in the Pastoral Epistles, but it is not characteristic of Paul's other epistles.

Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness [[Titus 1:1](#)].

"A servant of God" -- the word servant here actually means "bond slave." Paul says that he is a bond slave of God. We know from the Old Testament that a bond slave was one who chose to remain a slave of his master for life.

"An apostle of Jesus Christ." Paul is defending his apostleship. The reason that he asserts his apostleship here is that he is going to give instructions to the organized church. These instructions come from an apostle, the appointed writer of the Lord Jesus who was now communicating with His church through His apostles. The Epistle to Titus is a communication from the Lord Jesus to us also.

"According to the faith of God's elect." Paul does not say "for the faith," but "according to the faith" -- in other words, according to the norm or standard of faith which is set for God's elect today. Whether you are saved or not does rest on what you believe. Tell me what you think of Jesus Christ; tell me what you believe about His death on the Cross and what it means to you; tell me what you believe about His resurrection and what it means to you; tell me whether you believe the Bible to be the Word of God. With this information I think I can deduce whether you are a child of God or not. This is the norm, you see: "According to the faith of God's elect."

"God's elect" -- this is the way Paul speaks of saved people. He is not discussing the doctrine of election at all.

"And the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness." This could be better translated "the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness." The Greek preposition is kata, meaning "according to." My friend, if the truth that you have does not lead to a godly life, there is something radically wrong with your faith.

I was told once of a preacher who drinks, cusses, and runs with the country club crowd. On Sunday he preaches the gospel, and people come forward every week. Another pastor in that community asked me, "Dr. McGee, how is it that that man is prospering?" I told him I honestly did not think the man was prospering. Maybe he is bringing a lot of numbers into the church, but he is not building the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. Truth will lead to godliness, and if it doesn't lead to godliness, it is not truth, my friend.

Paul will dwell on this theme that when the gospel is believed it will lead to godliness because the people on the island of Crete were abusing the grace of God. They said that if they had been saved by grace they were free to live in sin if they wanted to. Paul answers that right here in this first verse by saying that when the truth of God is believed it will lead to godliness. Grace saves us, but it also lays down certain disciplines for our lives and calls us to live on a high plane. You cannot use the doctrine of the grace of God to excuse sin. If you think that you can be saved by grace and live in sin -- may I say this kindly, but I must say it -- you are not saved by grace; you are not saved at all. Salvation by grace leads to a godly life.

In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before
the world began [[Titus 1:2](#)].

"In hope of eternal life." The idea here is resting upon the hope of eternal life. In Titus we will see that Paul speaks of grace in three time zones. In [Titus 2:11-13](#) we see all three: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation" -- that is past; "teaching us" -- that is present; and "looking for that blessed hope" -- that is future. This is the hope that Paul is speaking of, and he says we are to rest upon that hope.

"Which God, that cannot lie." This hope was promised by a God who cannot lie. In [Romans 3:4](#) Paul wrote: "God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar. . . ."

Sometimes we believers almost make God out a liar by the lives we live. We say we believe something, but we don't really believe, and we act as if we don't believe. Paul says God cannot lie.

I have often wanted to preach a sermon on things that God cannot do. This is one: God cannot lie. Do you also know that you see something every day that God has never seen? You have seen your equal; God has never seen His equal. Why cannot God lie when we can? Well, you can do something God cannot do. You see, God must be true to Himself. He is holy and He is righteous -- that is His nature, and there are certain things He cannot do because of His nature. It is not because it is impossible for Him to do it; but because God is true to His nature, He cannot do it. He is righteous, He is just, and He never deceives. He is One you can depend upon.

"Promised before the world began" -- this promise was made back in eternity.

But hath in due times manifested his word through preaching,
which is committed unto me according to the commandment of
God our Saviour [[Titus 1:3](#)].

"In due times" means in His own seasons. God moves in a very orderly manner in what He does. God has made the peach tree to bud in the spring -- it will not stick out those beautiful buds when the first snow falls; it waits until spring.

"Hath in due times manifested his word through preaching." The word that is translated here as "preaching" comes from the Greek word *kerux*, which means "a herald" or "trumpet." A trumpet was used in that day to make a proclamation. If a ruler had a proclamation to make, a trumpeter came out and blew a trumpet, and then the proclamation was made. That is the idea here. Paul is saying that God has in the correct

seasons manifested His Word through a proclamation. He then adds that it has been committed to him to proclaim the Word "according to the commandment of God our Saviour."

To Titus, mine own son after the common faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour [Titus 1:4].

"To Titus, mine own son" or my genuine son. Paul had led Titus to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. Titus was Paul's spiritual son.

"After the common faith" -- the common faith is the faith that is shared by all, the faith that all believers must have. It is a living faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

"Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour." The grace of God has appeared, and, therefore, God extends mercy to us today. I don't know about you, but I use up a whole lot of the mercy of God. I am grateful that He is good to me and does not deal with me according to my orneriness and disobedience. He has simply been good to me. Grace, mercy, and peace -- peace is the present possession of the believer, but there is a peace coming when the Prince of Peace comes also. All these are "from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour."

An Orderly Church Must Have Ordained Elders Who Meet The Prescribed Requirements (1:5-9)

That is a pretty long title, but it belongs to a very important section of Scripture.

For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee [Titus 1:5].

Paul had left Titus in Crete to organize local churches with elders as spiritual leaders. The island of Crete is one of the largest islands in the Mediterranean Sea. There was a great deal of mythology and tradition connected with this island as there generally was with all of the Greek islands. According to their tradition, Minos was the one who first gave laws to the Cretans. He conquered the Aegean pirates who were there, and he established a navy. After the Trojan War, the principal cities of the island formed themselves into several republics, mostly independent. Crete was annexed to the Roman Empire about 67 B.C. These chief cities were Knossos, Cydonia, and Gortyna, and apparently there were churches now in all these places. Paul seems to have done a very effective missionary work on the island, but we have no record of it in Scripture whatsoever. There is actually no absolute proof that before his voyage to Rome he ever went to the island of Crete. But from the information we are given in this little epistle, we are led to believe that he was there and left Titus to organize the churches which were founded by him and Titus.

Crete was evidently a pretty bad place, and the people were not very good people. Paul himself says that they were liars, and that is certainly the thing for which they were noted in that day. There was a Greek word, kretizein, which means to speak like a Cretan and was synonymous with being a liar. One of their own poets wrote, "Crete, which a hundred cities doth maintain, cannot deny this, though to lying given."

Although they were known as liars, and Paul will have other uncomplimentary things to say about them, many of them turned to the Lord, and Paul writes to Titus to organize their churches.

"Set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city." The gift of an elder is a gift of men to the church. Putting your hand on the head of some men and going through a little ritual will not make them elders. But I believe it is important to do that with men who do have the gift of elders. I think the churches in Crete had elders, but they had never been ordained, or set aside. They were men who had a gift of supervision of the churches and were exercising that gift without an authority. Titus is to "ordain elders" -- appoint them, set them aside -- "in every city."

"As I had appointed thee." Paul says, "I have appointed you, Titus, and you are to appoint elders in these cities."

A man who holds an office of elder should have the gift of an elder. There are certain men who are made officers in the church who have no gift for it at all. That is half of our problem in many churches today, and the other half is that there are good men who have the gift and are not made officers in the church. As a result, some of our churches get into the hands of the wrong folk, and all sorts of problems arise.

Now here are the requirements for the men who are to hold this office:

If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly [[Titus 1:6](#)].

"If any be blameless" -- that does not mean he must be perfect, without sin. It does mean that any accusation that is brought against him must not be found to be true. His life must be above reproach.

When someone can point a finger at an officer of the church and accurately accuse him of dishonesty, then the cause of Christ is hurt. It does not matter how naturally gifted a man may be, if someone can say that his speech does not reflect a dedication to Christ, then the cause of Christ is hurt, and that man should not be an officer of the church.

"The husband of one wife, having faithful children." The idea here of "faithful children" means believing children. If a man cannot lead his own children to the Lord, he ought not to be an officer in the church. Please do not misunderstand me. I recognize that today in many wonderful Christian homes there is a son or daughter who is away from the Lord and who gives no evidence of godly upbringing. A man may be a fine, godly man who has a wonderful Christian home, and he may not be guilty of anything that caused that boy or girl to turn from Christ, but he should not be an officer in the church. As an officer in the church, he might be called upon to make a judgment about someone else. That person in turn could point his finger and say, "What about you? What about your son, your daughter? What right have you to talk to me?" For the cause of Christ and for the sake of the office, an officer in the church must have believing, obedient children.

"Not accused of riot or unruly." "Of riot" could be translated of profligacy. They are not to be out in a protest movement carrying placards, but instead they should be concerned with living a life glorifying to the Lord Jesus and with getting out His Word.

For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre [[Titus 1:7](#)].

This is so practical! A bishop (or elder) must not be "selfwilled" for he is a steward of God as well as a representative of the people. He is in the church to find and do God's will.

"Not soon angry" means not touchy.

"Not given to filthy lucre," that is, not covetous.

These are to be the characteristics of "a bishop." As we have said before, elder and bishop are synonymous terms. The word elder (presbuteros) refers to the individual, and he was to be a mature person both physically and spiritually. A bishop (episkopos) was an overseer; he ruled the church. Therefore, this word has reference to the office. But never was a church to have only one man made bishop or presbyter. There were always several.

There has been some disagreement as to whether there were elders already in the churches in Crete and Titus was to ordain them, or whether there were none and Titus was to now appoint some. If the latter was the case (which I do not think it was), then I feel that the churches would have had to agree upon the men Titus appointed. However, that is not the main issue, and it should not be the issue in churches today. Paul's emphasis is upon a man's personal requirements to hold such a position in a church.

But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate [[Titus 1:8](#)].

These are the requirements of the elder, and their meaning is familiar to us.

Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers [[Titus 1:9](#)].

A better rendering of this verse would be: "Holding fast the trustworthy word according to the teaching, that he may be able to exhort in the sound teaching and to convict the gainsayers (heretics)."

There were two things that an officer should be able to do: (1) He should be able to exhort, that is, to teach the Word of God; and (2) he must be able to confute or refute the heretics. I feel that men who hold office in a church should be Bible-trained men. During World War II we had what was called "ninety-day wonders." The army needed more officers and so they put them through a short course in a hurry, and they came up with some rather peculiar second lieutenants in those days. Remember that Paul told Timothy to "lay hands suddenly on no man . . ." ([1Tim. 5:22](#)). You are not to have a man converted one night, ask him to give his testimony the next night, make him an officer in the church on the third night, an evangelist on the fourth, and the pastor of the church on the fifth night! We sometimes do things like that today, and it is very unfortunate for the church. A church officer should be able to stand on the Word of God and to give it out.

The Bad Reputation Of The Cretans (1:10-16)

Paul is now going to talk about the bad reputation of the Cretans. We must remember that all men are sinners; we are all brothers in the sense that we are all sinners. All men are not in the brotherhood of God, because that comes only through the New Birth by becoming a son of God through faith in Christ. But surely we are all sons of Adam, and "in Adam all die," because all have sinned (see [1Cor. 15:22](#)). However, these Cretans had a particularly bad reputation:

For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision [[Titus 1:10](#)].

"Vain talkers" means empty chatterers. There are certain Christians (perhaps you know some) who are rather frothy at the mouth; they just talk a blue streak. I rode once with a man for two hundred miles, and from the moment I got in his car until I got out, the only thing I had to do was grunt and he would keep on talking! If you had added up all he had to say, it was just a great big bag of nothing, a whole lot of hot air. There are many empty talkers. It is all right to have fun and be lighthearted, but what Paul is condemning is constant chattering with nothing but empty words.

"Deceivers, specially they of the circumcision." Paul is referring to those who were seeking to contradict his teaching.

Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake [[Titus 1:11](#)].

"Who subvert whole houses" means to overthrow whole families. This was very serious. Wherever the Word of God is sown, the Devil gets in -- he's the enemy and he always sows tares among the wheat. I have found this to be true in my own experience. I was back East one time in an area in which our radio program is heard. We are reaching multitudes there, and many have come to Christ. But while I was there I learned that our broadcast is immediately followed by the broadcast of one of the cults. The speaker on that program attempts to "correct" my teaching of the Bible -- the Devil always gets in. Similarly, a great work of Christ had been done in Crete, but the enemy was right there to sow his own seed.

One of themselves, even a prophet of their own, said, The Cretians are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies [[Titus 1:12](#)].

"Evil beasts" means the Cretans were rude and cruel. "Slow bellies" means lazy gluttons. Paul is not being very complimentary here, is he? But this is the reputation they had in the Roman world of Paul's day. Paul is quoting a Cretan poet, Epimenides, who was born in Crete several centuries earlier. Another poet wrote, "Crete, which a hundred cities doth maintain, cannot deny this, though to lying given." Paul said, "Cretians are always liars." This does not mean that everybody who lived in Crete was a liar anymore than when you say that all Scottish people are tightfisted -- some are very generous. But the Cretans had the general reputation of being liars.

It is marvelous what the grace of God can do and did do among the people of Crete. They were liars, beastly, lazy people, who were big eaters. Many of them turned to Christ, and their lives were changed.

This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith [[Titus 1:13](#)].

Paul tells Titus that he is going to have to be a little more strict with the Cretans than he would with others because of their background and their very nature.

Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth [[Titus 1:14](#)].

"Not giving heed to Jewish fables." Paul's reference here is not just to legalism. There grew up around the Mosaic Law a great deal of writing which includes the Talmud and much more. I have not read very much in these Jewish writings because they never really interested me. But I have read some, and there are some pretty wild tales in them.

"Commandments of men, that turn from the truth." The Lord Jesus rebuked the religious rulers for adding traditions to God's law, and that is what Paul is talking about here. The teaching of legalism is in two phases -- one is that you are saved by the Law, and the other is that you are to live by the Law. Both of these teachings are very dangerous. We are saved by the grace of God and are actually called to live on a higher plane than that of the Ten Commandments. God gave the Ten Commandments to a nation, and I feel that they should be the law of the world today. When God says, "Thou shalt not kill," that is for everyone, Christian and non-Christian -- that is for the whole world. However, those who are saved by the grace of God are given instructions for living which are on an even higher plane than that.

Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled [[Titus 1:15](#)].

This is the verse that is used by the folk who say that if we are saved by grace it doesn't make any difference how we live; that is, if we are saved, we are pure and can live in any way we like. Certain cults have developed this teaching, saying they can live in sin (they don't call it sin -- it's not sin for them) because "unto the pure all things are pure."

What Paul is talking about has nothing to do with moral issues at all. He is speaking to this issue of legalism and the eating of meats. The teaching of many legalistic cults often includes a very unusual diet. But Paul says, "Unto the pure all things are pure." In other words, whether you eat meat or don't eat meat makes no difference at all. All food is clean. If you want to eat rattlesnake meat, that is your business; it's my business to keep away from it if I can! You can eat anything you want -- "unto the pure all things are pure."

If you are an unbeliever, any special diet you might concoct will make no difference in your relationship to God -- it will not save you. You can eat all the vegetables you want, but if you are not right with God, they will not make you pure. The Lord Jesus said that it is not the thing that goes into a man that defiles him, but what comes out of him (see [Matt. 15:18-20](#)).

They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate [[Titus 1:16](#)].

"They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him." Many believers today can deny and do deny God by the lives that they live. And they deny the Word of God. I knew a man who was an officer in the church, and he carried the biggest Bible I have ever seen. When he put it under his arm, he leaned to that side! Everybody believed him to be very pious, but outside the church he had the reputation of not really being honest. He carried a big Bible, but he didn't really believe it. You see, you can deny the Bible by the life you live, and you can deny God by the life you live.

"Being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate." Ceremonies and rituals cannot change the evil heart of man. Only the Word of God can change the human heart. When the heart is changed, the life will reveal the change. Paul and James were never in disagreement -- they both said that faith without works is dead. Saving faith produces a godly life. As Calvin said, "Faith alone saves, but the faith that saves is not alone."

Chapter 2

THEME: The church is to teach and preach the Word of God

The Church Must Teach Sound Doctrine (2:1-10)

The church must teach sound doctrine or it is not a church. I have written a little book entitled *The Spiritual Fingerprints of the Visible Church* in which I go back to the Day of Pentecost where we are told that those who were added to the church on that day ". . . continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" ([Acts 2:42](#)). These were the identification marks of the early church: the apostles' doctrine, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayer. It really doesn't matter how high the steeple may be or how beautifully the chimes may play, it is the message that is going out from the pulpit which will tell you whether the church is really a church, organized as Paul understood it and as the Word of God declares it.

In the first chapter we found that the elders whom Titus was to ordain were to be able to do two things: to exhort and to refute or confute the heretics. It is important not to spend your entire ministry refuting everybody. There are some men who have what I would call a negative ministry -- all they do is attack the enemies of the gospel. That is important, but I believe we all need a balanced ministry. An elder should be able to exhort from the Word of God as well as be able to answer a heretic. In this second chapter Paul's emphasis will be upon the teaching of the Word of God.

But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine [[Titus 2:1](#)].

"Sound doctrine" means the apostles' doctrine. The number one thing of importance to the early church was the apostles' doctrine. What we read in these epistles is also a part of the apostles' doctrine, by the way.

First of all, Paul has a message for the senior citizen -- for the senior citizen who is male and for the senior citizen who is female.

That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience [[Titus 2:2](#)].

They are to be sound in their love and in patience. They are to be "sober," that is, very vigilant, very serious. They should be men who are respected and self-controlled.

The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things [[Titus 2:3](#)].

"In behavior as becometh holiness" -- the aged women are to be reverent in their behavior.

"Not false accusers," that is, not gossips, and "not given to much wine," or not drunkards. "Teachers of good things." The older women are to teach the younger women:

That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children,

To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed [[Titus 2:4-5](#)].

"Keepers at home" means they are to be workers at home. I may get in trouble here, but I must say this: A wife's first responsibility is in her home. The home is not a playpen; it is a serious responsibility to be a wife and to care for children in the home. It is not something to be taken lightly.

I am confident that Paul would never have approved of the women's lib movement. I will stick my neck out even further and say that I am opposed to it -- I think it's wrong. I believe that a woman wants to be treated like a woman and not like a man. I was in a large business establishment recently where there were fifty stenographers, and from what I heard they were really promoting women's lib in that office. I agree that women should be promoted according to their ability and paid according to their ability, but I noticed when we came to get on the elevator the ladies felt like they should get on first. I let them do that because I was taught to do so. If these women really want equality in every way, they should not be working just in offices, but they should also take work as ditchdiggers. However, I am convinced that that is not really what they want. My friend, the biggest and most important business in the world is the making of a home.

"Good" means kindly.

"Obedient to their own husbands." The idea of obedience here is that the women should respond to their husbands. Paul uses the same Greek word in [Romans 8:7](#) where it is translated "subject." He says there, "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (italics mine). Paul's thought is that the natural man cannot respond to God; he cannot obey God; he has no way to respond to God. Now the wife is to respond to her husband; he is the aggressor, and she is to respond to him.

A great, big, brawny fellow once came to see me in my office, and he said, "I want you to talk to my wife and tell her to obey me!" I told him I would do nothing of the kind, and

he asked me why. I said, "When's the last time you told your wife that you loved her?" He couldn't remember and said, "What has that got to do with it?" I told him, "That has everything in the world to do with it! Until you tell her that you love her, I don't see why she should respond to you. Didn't you tell her you loved her when you were courting? Well, just keep that up. The thing to do is to just keep up the courtship. You keep telling her that you love her, and she will respond to you a great deal better than she has been." The wife is to respond to the love of her husband.

Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded [[Titus 2:6](#)].

Now Paul turns his attention to the young men, and he probably means that Titus is the one who is to teach the young men.

In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity [[Titus 2:7](#)].

Paul says to this young preacher Titus, "You be a pattern, an example, for the other young men."

"In doctrine shewing uncorruptness." "Uncorruptness" has the idea of incorruptness -- that is, in his teaching he is to show his complete faith in the Word of God and appreciate the seriousness of the matters with which he is dealing.

Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you [[Titus 2:8](#)].

In other words, your conversation should reveal the fact that you are a child of God.

Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again [[Titus 2:9](#)].

"Exhort servants" -- now Paul turns his attention to another group. In the early church there were many slaves. In fact, 90 percent of the names on the walls of the catacombs are those of slaves or ex-slaves. The gospel met a great need for this class of people in that day.

"To be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things." Again, the idea behind obedience is that they should respond to their masters, be interested in them and in their work. Anyone, especially those in Christian work, should put their heart into their job or else get out of it. If you work for a Christian organization, you do it because you want to work for it. I hope you get a good living out of it, but that is not the point. Christian work is to be done with the heart as well as with the head and hands.

"Not answering again," that is, not talking back to your employer.

Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things [[Titus 2:10](#)].

"Not purloining" means not stealing. Businesses lose many millions of dollars each year because employees steal from them. "Not purloining" means you should not be a thief.

"But shewing all good fidelity" -- showing faithfulness.

"That they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things." The Greek word for "adorn" is the same word from which we got our English word cosmetics. I am often asked whether I feel Christian women should wear makeup. I would say yes, the kind Paul is speaking of here, and plenty of it. "Adorn the doctrine of God" -- in other words, if you are sound in the faith, you should be wearing the appropriate cosmetics. I would like to see more of the lipstick of a kind tongue. Speaking kindly is a mighty fine lipstick. And then the face powder of sincerity and reality. My, there are all kinds of cosmetics that you should use today as a Christian.

The Church Must Preach The Grace Of God (2:11-15)

Now Paul interrupts these admonitions to put a doctrinal foundation under the lives of these people. He states the gospel, and he states it in three time zones -- the past, the present, and the future.

I grew up in the horse-and-buggy days, and I never cease to wonder at the speed of jet travel. Beside the actual speed of the planes, the crossing of time zones makes it possible to arrive at the end of a three- or four-hour flight and see that it is only an hour later than it was when you started. I understand they are working now on a plane that will travel three times the speed of sound. That means you could leave Dallas, Texas, and arrive in Los Angeles two hours before you left Dallas! That would be a wonderful thing.

However, I think the most wonderful thing in the world is that the grace of God is in three time zones. We see that in the next three verses: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared" ([Tit. 2:11](#)) -- that's the past time zone; "teaching us" ([Tit. 2:12](#)) - - that's the present time zone of grace; and "looking for that blessed hope" ([Tit. 2:13](#)) -- that is the future time zone. These, then, are the three time zones of grace. Let us look at them a little more closely:

For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men [[Titus 2:11](#)].

Paul says to the Cretans, "I want to put under you the doctrine of the grace of God because you need a solid foundation." The grace of God is the way God saves us. Years ago I heard a great preacher, Dr. Dodd, in Shreveport, Louisiana, say, "My pulpit is a place for good news; my study is the place for good advice." The gospel is not good advice -- it is good news. It is even more than that; it is the power of God unto salvation.

Paul is enjoining Titus to demand of the Cretans that they live lives that adorn the gospel, for it is the power of God. There is absolutely no excuse for any Christian to live a life of defeat and failure -- "for the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men."

"Hath appeared" means it shines forth -- it is the epiphany. What the Lord Jesus did for us when He came more than nineteen hundred years ago is the gospel, the good news. He died for us, and He rose again. God doesn't save us by His love, and He doesn't save us by His mercy. Ephesians tells us: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God" ([Eph. 2:8](#), italics mine). Mercy is the compassion of God that prompted Him to send a Savior to mankind. If one man could be saved by the mercy

of God, all mankind would be saved. It wouldn't have been necessary for Christ to die; the Cross would have been circumvented. God loves men, but He didn't save us by His love. Love is the divine motive, but God is not only love, He is righteous and holy and just. The holy demands of God, His just claims, and His righteous standard had to be met. The love of God may long to save us, but the immutable law of justice makes love powerless to do so. Therefore, Christ, by dying for our sins, met the holy demands of God's justice, and He can now save us by grace. How wonderful it is to be saved by the grace of God! When we were guilty, Christ paid the penalty. Grace is not complicated or implicated with human effort. God doesn't ask your cooperation; He doesn't ask for your conduct or your character in order to save you. God only asks men to believe Him, to trust Him, and to accept Christ. God's way is the best way, and it is the only way.

Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world [[Titus 2:12](#)].

God is not trying to reform this world; He is redeeming men who accept Christ. The gospel does not appeal to Christ-rejecting men to do better. When a person says, "I am going to try to do better," I think he is a liar. If you have rejected Jesus Christ, you might as well try to get all you can out of this life, because this life is all that you are going to get. Today our government is trying to get people to stop smoking; they're trying to educate people to the dangers of cigarettes. However, God is not asking you to do such things. You might as well eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow you'll die. God doesn't want to reform you; He wants to redeem you.

"Teaching us" -- teaching means child-training. God is calling those who are His own, who are redeemed, to live for Him and to avoid "worldly lusts."

Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ [[Titus 2:13](#)].

"Looking for that blessed hope" -- this is the next happening in the program of God: Christ is coming to take His church out of this world.

"The glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." This reveals that Paul taught the deity of Christ; he speaks of the great God who is our Savior, and who is He? He is Jesus Christ. And what did He do? --

Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works [[Titus 2:14](#)].

He gave Himself for us that He might redeem us. He paid a price for us that He might redeem us "from all iniquity."

"And purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." "A peculiar people" would be better translated "a people for His possession." It is true that God wants you to live for Him and wants you to do good works, but He will have to redeem you first, my friend.

These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee [[Titus 2:15](#)].

Paul says to Titus, "You are a young man. Don't let them despise you because of the life you live." Titus should be able to teach all these things with authority.

This has been a wonderful epistle. Every young preacher ought to study carefully the Book of Titus.

Chapter 3

THEME: The church is to perform good works

This epistle gives us the picture which covers the entire spectrum of what God wants for the church. We saw in the first chapter that God wants the church to be an orderly organization. Then we saw in the next chapter that the church is to be sound in doctrine. Now we shall learn that, to be all that God wants for the church, the church is to perform good works.

Good Works Are An Evidence Of Salvation (3:1-7)

Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work [[Titus 3:1](#)].

The very first thing he mentions here is the fact that the church must have members who are law abiding. A believer should obey the laws of the land in which he lives unless those laws conflict or contradict his duty and relationship to God.

I always felt embarrassed when I taught evening Bible classes in downtown Los Angeles and would be requested to announce that someone had parked in a no parking place. Or sometimes I had to announce that a car was blocking a driveway so that the people who owned the driveway couldn't get out. That kind of parking was breaking the law on the part of someone in my class who apparently didn't pay very much attention to the fact that a Christian is to be subject to principalities and powers.

Now that brings up the question of what a believer should do when the laws of the land conflict with his duty and relationship to God. For example, should a young man who is drafted into military service go out to war when his real Christian conviction tells him otherwise? Fortunately in our country such a young man with real convictions against war can be a conscientious objector. He need not go into the armed forces to carry a gun, but he can spend the same amount of time as the other young men in the army but be assigned noncombat duties. I think any young man should be commended for that, because I believe it takes courage and conviction for a young man under those circumstances to stand on his two feet and say, "Yes, I'll serve; I'll wear the uniform, but I cannot conscientiously carry a gun." I think that sympathy and understanding should be granted to such a young man.

On the other hand, there have been many young men in this country who have run away to escape the draft. They did not run away because of religious conviction. I can't think of any other explanation than that they were disloyal to their country. They were not obedient to this nation. These young men wanted to enjoy all the blessings and benefits of

our nation but did not want to meet its responsibilities. They have broken the law and should pay the penalty.

We are to be subject to the principalities and powers over us. A church should teach this; part of the message that should be given to church members is that they should be obedient to the powers that be. That obedience is not to the man but to the office that he represents. Perhaps you resent the manner in which a police officer gives you a citation for a traffic violation, but you should respect the uniform he wears. He represents the segment of our society that protects our persons and our property. Without them we would be in a bad way today.

This verse also raises the question of whether a Christian should go into politics or not. I believe that the individual Christian is free to go into politics, but I do not believe that the church should go into politics. If we would have a real moving of the Spirit of God, many of the men from our churches would go into these different offices in government today.

A good example of this is the Wesleyan movement in England. Wesley never tried to straighten out the king of England or even the Church of England. He just went out and preached the Word of God. Men were converted, among whom were men like William Wilberforce, the great philanthropist and abolitionist. They were men who had been gamblers and drunkards, with no concern for the poor, until they came to know Christ. These men started the great labor movement associated with the Wesleyan revival in England, which was the beginning of the movement against child labor and the protection of workmen on the job. We need individuals who will enter into government and take social action, but the church as an organization is not called upon to go into politics.

"To be ready to every good work." The church is to instruct individuals to be eager, to be anxious, and to learn to perform good works. We'll note this as we go along.

Now there is also a negative side to the exhortation:

To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men [[Titus 3:2](#)].

"Speak evil of no man" means we are to malign no one, and we are not to repeat gossip. It has been said that you can't believe everything you hear today, but you can repeat it! That is what he is talking about here -- we are not to repeat what we hear. Many evil reports are passed from person to person without even a shred of evidence that the report is true. Another old saying is that some people will believe anything if it is whispered to them!

However, if the church has solid evidence that a member is doing something evil, that member should be named. You may remember that Paul named certain men who were evil men: Phygellus and Hermogenes, Hymenaeus and Philetus, and Alexander the coppersmith. Then he also said that Demas had forsaken him, having loved this present world.

For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another [[Titus 3:3](#)].

This is a picture of the unsaved today, and a picture of you and me before we knew Christ. We were foolish, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to lusts and pleasures, living selfishly, and hating others. That is a picture of the lost world.

You can go to visit in non-Christian homes, and you will find these things. Go into any business, any office, any factory, and you will see these things present. Unfortunately, you can see some of these same things in our churches. There can be a pretense of loving, but under it there is envying and hating and gossiping. You can find churches divided into little cliques and groups; yet they boast about how sound they are in the faith. That is a disgrace to the cause of Christ. This is a picture of the unsaved given to us here. It ought never to be a picture of you or me as believers.

But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared,

Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost [[Titus 3:4-5](#)].

"Not by works of righteousness which we have done." [Verse 3](#) gave us a picture of how we were before we came to know Christ. It is important to understand that becoming a Christian doesn't mean just turning over a new leaf -- you will find yourself writing on the new leaf the same things that you wrote on the old leaf. Making New Year's resolutions and promising to do better doesn't make you a Christian. Nor are you saved on the basis of works of righteousness, good deeds, which you have done.

"But according to his mercy he saved us." Because Christ died for us and paid the penalty for our sins, God is prepared to extend mercy to us; it is according to His mercy that He saved us. And He is rich in mercy, which means He has plenty of it. Whoever you are, He can save you today because Christ died for you. He paid the penalty and makes over to you His righteousness!

"By the washing of regeneration." "Washing" means laver -- it is the laver of regeneration. In the Old Testament the laver, which stood in the court of the tabernacle and later the temple, represented this.

This washing of regeneration is what the Lord was speaking about in the third chapter of John: ". . . Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" ([John 3:5](#)). The water represents the Word of God -- the Bible will wash you. It has a sanctifying power, a cleansing power. We are cleansed by the Word of God. The Holy Spirit uses the Word of God -- "born of water and of the Spirit." That is the way we are born again.

"And renewing of the Holy Ghost" -- He regenerates us.

Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour [[Titus 3:6](#)].

Have you noticed that in everything God does there is a surplus? He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.

That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life [[Titus 3:7](#)].

"The hope of eternal life" is again pointing to the great hope of the believer, the coming of Christ for His church.

Good Works Are Profitable For The Present And Future (3:8-15)

This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men [[Titus 3:8](#)].

The fact that the believer is saved by the grace of God does not excuse him from performing good works. The fact of the matter is, he is to "be careful to maintain good works." Paul says that Titus should just keep affirming this constantly.

My friend, after you have been saved, God is going to talk to you about good works. Until that time, God is not even interested in your "good works" because what you call a good work, God calls dirty laundry. The righteousness of man is filthy rags in His sight (see [Isa. 64:6](#)). He doesn't want any of that. He wants to save you. If you do come to Him just as you are, He will save you, because He has done something for you. He is not asking you to do something -- what could you do for God? After you are saved, after you are a child of God, then He wants to talk to you about producing good works. He wants you to get involved in getting out the Word of God to others.

"Be careful to maintain good works." These are things that you should think about and consider; ponder, be anxious to be producing works for God.

But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain [[Titus 3:9](#)].

We are to defend the faith, Paul says, but we are not to do it by argument or debate. That does no good; that never led anyone to the Lord. You may whip a man down intellectually by your arguments, but that does not touch his heart and win him for Christ. Stay away from foolish questions and genealogies and contentions.

That is the reason I do not develop certain subjects that are sensational. For example, during this period of time in which I am writing, demonism seems to be the topic of the hour. I have had any number of letters saying, "Dr. McGee, give a series on demonism. Write a book about it." Let's not get involved in that kind of thing. I would much rather tell you about the Holy Spirit who can indwell you. If He is in you, no demon could ever possess you! ". . . greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world" ([1John 4:4](#)). That is what we need to know. It is so easy to get sidetracked.

A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject [[Titus 3:10](#)].

We have been asked to join in certain projects in which there are some heretics. I am not interested in being joined with anyone who has views that are in opposition to the Word of God. God tells us here to be separate from heretics. Just let them alone; reject them.

Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself [[Titus 3:11](#)].

The heretic is one who has turned aside from the truth.

When I shall send Artemas unto thee, or Tychicus, be diligent to come unto me to Nicopolis: for I have determined there to winter.

Bring Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey diligently, that nothing be wanting unto them.

And let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful [[Titus 3:12-14](#)].

Paul gives a final admonition about good works. We must "learn" to maintain good works. It's something that must be worked at. A great many people think it is easy; we need to know what God considers good works, and we need to learn how to do them.

Paul concludes this practical letter to Titus with a benediction.

All that are with me salute thee. Greet them that love us in the faith. Grace be with you all. Amen [[Titus 3:15](#)].

Bibliography

(For Bibliography to Titus, see Bibliography at the end of 2 Timothy.)